

Environment Committee Public Hearing 3.7.2022
RE: SB 243- An Act Concerning Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices

Dear Co-Chairs Sen. Cohen and Rep. Gresko, Vice-Chairs Sen. Slap and Rep. Palm, Ranking Members Sen. Miner and Rep. Harding, and members of the Environment Committee:

My name is Dina Brewster, I am a farmer in Ridgefield, Connecticut. I am currently serving as Executive Director of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Connecticut (CT NOFA) and I sit on the board of directors for the Fairfield County Farm Bureau. I own The Hickories, a 45 acre certified organic fruit, vegetable, pastured livestock, cut flower, and conservation seed production farm business. We operate a CSA program, run a Farm Store, and serve to connect our community with working land.

One never gets to the end of the documentary film or the newsfeed and the answer is to put more synthetic chemicals on our farmland or to burn more fossil fuels. So, if we know what we need to do to live together and foster a future for the planet, then why aren't we all doing it? **SB 243** gives us an opportunity to build a future for Connecticut that is both more durable and positions us as part of the climate solution rather than bystanders to the climate crisis. There can be no comprehensive climate solution for Connecticut without including our farmland in mitigation.

Farmers, landscapers, and gardeners grasp the enormity of the climate crisis with greater clarity each season. Twinned with this, Connecticut must face the mounting imperative for greater justice and equity in the food system, land access, and farmland restoration. As a result of these twinned crises, we find our agriculture at the base of pivotal climbs. **SB 243** offers us an opportunity to shift our paradigm: invest in fulling the durable farms and the innovative farmers of the future – farmers that will leave a legacy of quantifiable gains in climate change mitigation, carbon drawdown, clean water, and the protection of biodiversity. These climate smart farming operations can shoulder the work of cleaning our air, our water, and fostering the ecosystems on which we all depend. But we cannot waste time, we must act immediately to support farms of the future. The expanded **Farmland Restoration and Climate Resiliency Program** will assist farmers and landowners to afford and implement practices that benefit us all.

Farmers need to know they have our support as they tackle the challenges of innovating, rethinking the status quo, and adopting the kinds of Climate Smart agricultural practices that will build the vital natural resources upon which we all depend.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of S.B. 243. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions.
Sincerely,

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